

## Questions for D-E NCA Advisory Council to Consider for each zone of the NCA

*“The Council shall advise the Secretary with respect to the preparation and implementation of the management plan.”*

*-Public Law 111-11—March 30, 2009*

### Overarching Questions (general topics addressed by the Advisory Council throughout the process)

1. Is the range of alternatives adequate?
2. What other public process steps should the BLM undertake, if any, to compile needed information?
3. What factors or criteria should BLM consider in identifying a Preferred Alternative? (later-post-August)

### Suggested discussion questions for Zone 5: Recreation

1. Should the BLM consider making a commitment for recreation in this zone?

#### ***Steps to answer this question:***

- a. Is there demand for such a commitment?

What the BLM has heard:

Support for commitments to recreation:

- City of Delta and Delta County see this NCA as an opportunity for bringing more tourism and recreation to Delta. A commitment by the BLM to the development of SRMA-type recreation areas (or one area) in this zone could help bring tourism and recreation dollars to both the City of Delta and Delta County.
- The mountain bike community would like to develop an SRMA-type mountain biking area somewhere within the NCA.

Opposition to commitments to recreation:

- Scoping comments, focus group research indicated concerns over potential increases in Escalante Canyon traffic related to tourism/recreation

- Advisory Council discussions and focus group research indicated that hunters in the higher elevations of this zone would be concerned over an increase in users or visitation to those areas.
- Have heard “leave it the way it is” through focus groups and advisory council discussions.

If the answer to question 1 is yes, then proceed to question 2. If the answer to question 1 is no move on to next zone or issue.

**2. What types of commitments for recreation could the BLM make in this zone?** There could be multiple types of commitments, which could be included as alternatives in the plan.

***Steps to answer this question:***

- a) What demands exist for recreation in this zone?

What the BLM has heard:

- The mountain bike community would like to develop a trail system in the Sawmill Mesa area of this zone
- The quiet users would like more quiet use opportunities in the DENCA outside of the wilderness area
- OHV users would like to continue to use motorized trails in the Cactus Park/Sawmill Mesa area.

Once demand for a particular recreational activity and/or experience is identified, proceed to b, c, d and e

- b) What limitations would impact the ability of the BLM to make a commitment to this particular recreational experience in this zone? (Think about the BLM’s mandate to conserve, protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the NCA)

i. Topography and soils

- The deep canyons in this zone (Escalante, Dry Fork Escalante, Cottonwood) confine any potential trail development.

ii. Cultural Resources

- As in most of the NCA, there is likely to be a high density of cultural sites in zone 5

- Vandalism has been a problem in the past in this zone  
(For example, the Dry Fork petroglyph panel)
- Cultural surveys would need to be done prior to the development of any recreation facilities (including trails) in the NCA

### iii. Special Status Species

- Colorado hookless cactus is found primarily in Escalante Canyon and in the Kelso Gulch/Cactus Park area of this zone.
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program identified occurrences of Grand Junction milkvetch in Escalante Canyon and in Wagon Park.
- The hanging gardens along Escalante Canyon are globally significant. Impacts to the watersheds of the seeps feeding these hanging gardens impact the hanging gardens themselves.
- Desert bighorn sheep use range throughout the lower elevations of this zone, with concentration areas in Escalante Canyon and near 25 Mesa road. The construction of new routes and increased usage in this area could impact the herd.
- White-tailed prairie dogs range includes the Cactus Park area of this zone.
- BLM sensitive fish could be impacted by recreation along riparian zones.

### iv. Vegetation and Wildlife

- The upper elevations of this zone provide important habitat for big game, including some winter concentration areas.
- The construction of routes and usage of existing routes in otherwise un-fragmented habitat has an impact on many species of wildlife
- The riparian corridors in this zone provide important habitat for a wide range of wildlife species, and include rare communities of intact, native riparian vegetation.

### v. Access issues

- Access to much of zone 5 is via Escalante Canyon road, Sawmill Mesa road and 25 Mesa Road
- Access to Wagon Park is primarily via Divide and Dominguez Campground roads
- Recreational trespass issues in Escalante Canyon create potential conflicts.

c) What would the costs and tradeoffs be for the BLM to make this commitment?

- The costs of surveys (Threatened and Endangered Species, Cultural, Paleontological) for trail construction are likely to be the biggest cost for recreation in any zone of the NCA.

d) What partnership opportunities would enable the BLM to make this commitment? Has a demonstrated commitment been made by these partners?

- OHV and mountain biking community groups have expressed interest in partnerships with the BLM
  - These partnerships could include assistance with trail construction, trail maintenance and monitoring

e) Is management for this particular recreational experience feasible/reasonable?